

**REMARKS**

A Request for Continued Examination has been submitted concurrently herewith, requesting entry of the amendment filed April 7, 2004. In addition, a further amendment is submitted herewith in response to the comments made by the Examiner in the Advisory Action mailed June 4, 2004, as discussed hereinafter. Applicant therefore requests that further examination of this application proceed on the basis of the claims as amended and set forth in full in the amendment submitted herewith.

As noted in the Remarks which accompanied the April 7, 2004 amendment, an interview was conducted on March 31, 2004 between the undersigned counsel and the Examiner, Mr. Wimer. At that interview, a proposed amendment of independent Claims 3, 5, 27 and 33 was discussed, and at the conclusion of the discussion it was agreed that the latter independent claims, amended as proposed, distinguish over the prior art of record. By the amendment submitted April 7, 2004, Applicant adopted all of the changes proposed during the interview, with the single exception that the word "at" preceding the word "structural" in the second paragraph of the body of Claim 3 was changed to "in", as also discussed during the interview.

In the Advisory Action dated June 4, 2004, the Examiner has indicated that the revisions made by the April 7, 2004 amendment are substantive in nature, and accordingly, entry of that amendment was refused. In addition, the

Examiner also noted that certain language contained in the claims as amended (in particular, the word "gaps" and the phrase "body components fabricated of sheet metal") did not appear in the specification, that this language should be incorporated into the specification in order to provide a proper antecedent basis for the language of the claims.

The submission of the RCE, filed contemporaneously herewith, provides the basis for entry of the April 7 amendment. In addition, the revisions set forth herein address the issues raised by the Examiner in the Advisory Action. In particular, the word "gaps" has been inserted into paragraph [0009] in order to provide a proper antecedent basis for that word as it appears in the claims. In addition, the phrase "body components fabricated of sheet metal" has been changed to "metallic body components". The latter phraseology is supported by the specification, which states that the vehicle outer skin is "metallic" and it is made up of individual components. (See, for example, paragraphs [0012], [0026] and [0027]).

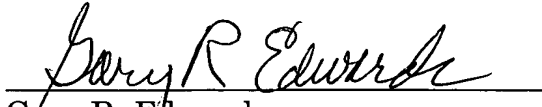
The amendments made herein do not depart substantively from the revisions discussed and agreed to with the Examiner at the interview conducted on March 31, 2004, except that in Claim 3, the body components are no longer specified to be "metallic", since metallic body components are not necessary for the embodiment defined in Claim 3. Otherwise, the substance of independent Claims 3, 5, 27 and 33 does not depart significantly from the versions which were

discussed at the interview. Accordingly, since the latter claims are all of the independent claims currently of record in this application, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims of record are now allowable, for the reasons discussed in detail in the Remarks which accompanied the April 7, 2004 amendment.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/950993).

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary R. Edwards  
Registration No. 31,824

CROWELL & MORING LLP  
Intellectual Property Group  
P.O. Box 14300  
Washington, DC 20044-4300  
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500  
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844  
GRE:kms  
328598v1